

City of Rockville Environment Commission

Sustainable Development and Energy Committee (SDEC)

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday May 25, 2010

Diamondback Terrapin Room, City Hall

7:00 pm

1. Welcome / Agenda Review/ Minutes Adoption

Erica Shingara called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 pm. In attendance: Christine Davidson-McCord, Laura Schlee, Lea Rosenbohm, Tolu Odunlami, Zhimei Luo, staff liaison Erica Shingara, and intern Joey Gould.

2. Environment Commission Report

Report on the May 11th Environment Commission (EC) meeting.

- The final preparations are being made for Hometown Holidays. Emphasis will be placed on recycling. The Commission will have a booth on Sunday, May 30, 2010 from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm (but not on Saturday).
- Other topics discussed included the White Tailed Deer Task Force, graffiti ordinance, commercial recycling, and committee reports.
- The Mayor and Council Discussion and Instruction on Chapter 19 (Stormwater Management) occurred on May 24, 2010 and adoption is anticipated on June 7, 2010.

3. Building Code Update/Green Building Regulations

- The amendments to Chapter 5, "Buildings and Building Regulations", including Article XIV, "Green Building Regulations," were adopted on May 10, 2010. The main changes were the defining threshold for building additions (from the proposed 1,500 gsf or 110% to 2,000 gsf) and the modification of U and R-values to correspond to the 2009 IECC. The Green Building Regulations go into effect on July 1, 2010. Special thanks to all the SDEC members who contributed over the last 3 years to the development of this ordinance!
- In support of a Mayor and Council request, the Committee had previously reviewed Rockville's existing "New and Expanded Property Tax Credits for Businesses" (Section 22-12 of the City Code) to see if it could be modified to include an eligibility requirement that the construction or expansion must achieve LEED Silver certification or higher. The SDEC had requested additional information about the program and Finance provided the following responses:
 - Is there a sunset date for Section 22-12? *There does not appear to be a sunset date.*
 - How many businesses have taken advantage of this business tax credit? *None*
 - How much money has been granted as tax credits under this existing program? *None*

- According to Finance, the existing tax credit has never been used. It appears the credit was developed by the two economic development entities of the City and County. Since it was created in partnership with the County, it could not be modified easily to incorporate green building. If the Mayor and Council desired a separate tax credit, then there are several factors that would need to be evaluated: 1) What is legal?; 2) How much will it cost in lost revenue?; and 3) and how will we administer and monitor the credits?
- There are also limitations to what can be developed by the City because Montgomery County ultimately manages the City's tax bills. The County has limitations to what is shown on the tax bill and it may be difficult for them to manage a 1-5 year program. An alternative may be to reimburse the taxpayer for their credit for the program period.
- Christine Davidson-McCord attended the National Association of Home Builders Green Conference and provided information on model energy programs and future incentive programs:
 - Minnesota's Project ReEnergize: a model of a successful home energy efficiency rebate program. The program was implemented by the Builders Association of Minnesota with funds from DOE and the state. Provides standard rebates for windows, attic sealing, insulation, and water heaters. Examples of the application, checklists, and information were provided
 - Federal Home Star (Cash for Caulkers) program: Proposed federal legislation to create jobs by providing short-term incentives for home energy efficiency improvements. Program passed the House and will proceed to the Senate (May 27 introduction).

4. Education and Outreach

- Hometown Holidays
 - Saturday, May 29: (1-8 p.m. Green Festival; 3-3:30 p.m. Weatherize DC)
 - Sunday, May 30: (1-8 p.m. Green Festival; 2-2:30 p.m. Rain barrels and Rainscaping; 4-4:30 p.m. Safe Disposal of Pharmaceuticals)
- Updates to the City's Green Building, Energy, and Climate Websites
 - Each member discussed their green interests and expertise.
 - The Committee reviewed examples of local government green building, energy, and sustainability web sites to support potential updates to the City's Green Building and Energy and Climate web sites. Suggested examining the websites of Austin, Houston, Boulder, and another city in CA as well.
 - **Action items:** Members selected topics to research and draft web pages to provide homeowners and businesses step-by-step information and resources on the following topics:
 - i. Christine Davidson-McCord: green retrofits for existing homes
 - ii. Laura Schlee: renewable energy and construction waste management
 - iii. Lea Rosenbohm: easy energy efficiency and green tips
 - iv. Zhimei Luo: food
 - v. *Seth Adams (absent) and Tolu Odunlami: were *nominated* to provide guidance for commercial green building
 - vi. Please note: The drafts can reference public/government websites but cannot cite private companies or websites.

5. Member News / Announcements / Upcoming Events

- Erica Shingara presented Washington D.C.'s new "Green.DC Map" that highlights environmental points of interest in the city (e.g., green buildings, PV arrays, green roofs, community gardens, etc.). Rockville may consider replicating this program. For more information: <http://rrc.dc.gov/green/cwp/view,a,1231,q,463333.asp>
- Lea Rosenbohm requested information on complete streets.
- Christine Davidson-McCord will be teaching a green remodeling class. There may be opportunities to provide similar classes to Rockville residents.
- Rockville hosted the Maryland Climate Protection Network meeting on May 5, 2010. Representatives from U.S. EPA, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, ICLEI, and county and city governments from across the state came to discuss climate protection and sustainability programs.

6. Wrap-up and Adjourn

The next SDEC meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 25, 2010 at the Rockville City Hall. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm.